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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [UNHRC](#) [PINR](#) [CU](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: FRENCH MFA PLEADS FOR USG TO SEEK HRC SEAT

REF: A. STATE 156800 B. STATE 160278 C. PARIS 6436 D.

PARIS 6498

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Josiah B. Rosenblatt.
Reasons 1.4b,d

¶1. (C) MFA IO PDAS-Equivalent Marc Giacomini welcomed reftel demarche with affirmations of broad agreement between French and U.S. positions on the Human Rights Council (HRC) during a 9/27 meeting with poloff (ref A). Giacomini concurred on the necessity of maintaining country-specific mandate and that condemnatory resolutions were an appropriate HRC function. He did not however view the option of a review of extant country-specific resolutions as problematic. Giacomini acknowledged OIC efforts to gear the new HRC toward consistent Israel-bashing. He averred that OIC initiatives were forcing awkward situations and choices for EU-members.

¶2. (C) Giacomini repeatedly appealed for the USG to seek a seat on the HRC. USG membership represented the only chance, he believed, to straighten out the HRC. Our absence left France on the spot in countering divisive OIC initiatives. Giacomini noted that HRC membership for the USG would be awkward in some regards, specifically on Guantanamo, where the USG remained highly vulnerable -- and thereby weakened its partners as well, he said. He believed the USG had committed a blunder by not facilitating the visit of the UN human rights experts to Guantanamo and their request for direct and unmonitored meetings with detainees. Special Rapporteur on Torture Manfred Nowak was not a threat to the USG, he asserted. Giacomini pointed out that the French Government had allowed the same UN human rights experts unimpeded access to former French detainees after their return from Guantanamo (and incarceration in France).

¶3. (C) Giacomini reiterated French agreement with the USG on the need to maintain the HRC mandate on Cuba (Refs B, C). He recalled that the Special Rapporteur-equivalent for Cuba, Christine Chanet, was a French citizen. He regretted that Cuba continued to block her access to the country, thereby obliging her to issue reports derived from second-hand information.

¶4. (U) Reftel D reports Giacomini's comments on the Venezuelan drive for a Security Council seat.

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